



# NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

## LANDS LEGACY INITIATIVE



### Coastal Dredging and Restoration

NOAA is requesting an increase of \$10 million in FY 2000 to help accelerate critical dredging projects and avoid costly delays, while incorporating key coastal habitat restoration goals through the beneficial reuse or environmentally safe disposal of dredged materials. NOAA's coastal dredging and restoration request is a key component of the Administration's FY 2000 Lands Legacy Initiative, and complements other Lands Legacy investments seeking to help protect and restore our valuable ocean and coastal resources.

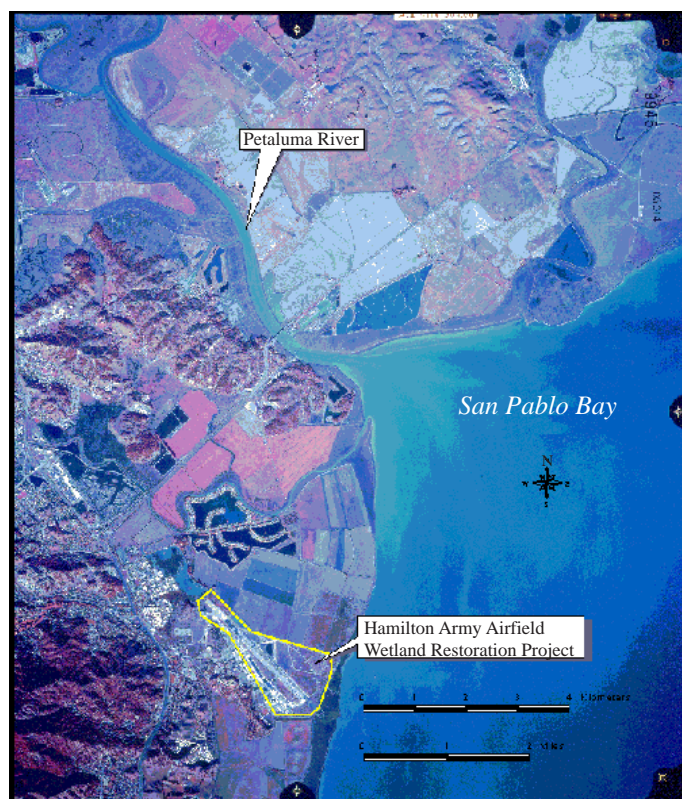


Photo courtesy of NASA

The Hamilton Army Airfield Wetland Restoration Area, San Francisco, CA.

#### NOAA Budget

FY 2000  
Change  
\$M

##### National Ocean Service

###### Ocean Resource Conservation and Assessment

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| (Coastal Dredging and Restoration) | \$10 |
| (Coral Reef Restoration)           | \$10 |

###### Ocean & Coastal Management

|   |      |
|---|------|
| (Coastal Zone Management Program)             | \$32 |
| (National Estuarine Research Reserves System) | \$3  |
| (National Marine Sanctuaries)                 | \$12 |

##### National Marine Fisheries Service

###### Conservation and Management Operations

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| (Fisheries Habitat Restoration) | \$23 |
|---------------------------------|------|

##### Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction Account

|   |      |
|---|------|
| (National Estuarine Research Reserves System) | \$12 |
| (National Marine Sanctuaries)                 | \$3  |

NOAA Lands Legacy Initiative - - Total \$105

### Dredging: Economics and Environment

The dredging of ports, harbors, and shipping channels is essential for navigation safety, the national economy and national security. Approximately 95% of all U.S. exports and imports (excluding Mexico and Canada) pass through our ports, with foreign trade contributing to over 20 percent of our gross domestic product. To keep the network of ports and harbors productive, over 400 million cubic yards of material must be dredged annually. At the same time the nation's wetlands, estuaries, rivers, and other coastal habitats where dredging and dredged material disposal occur, are critically important for supporting wildlife, commercial fisheries, recreational opportunities, and livable communities. The challenge is to ensure the overall compatibility between economic and environmental goals.

### The Dredging and Restoration Opportunity

While progress has been made to preserve natural resources and habitats for the benefit of future generations, pressures from increasing coastal populations and effects of human activities still destroy and threaten coastal areas. Active restoration efforts are needed to ensure the ecological vitality of the coastal zone, provide for multiple use of those resources, and generate continuing environmentally sound economic growth and stability of coastal communities.

Ports and harbors where dredging is needed provide us with opportunities to achieve restoration of degraded coastal habitats. The proper planning, disposal and use of dredge material can protect adjacent wetlands and dredged material can be put to productive use in wetland restoration, beach nourishment and other projects.

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However, the environmental and economic issues surrounding the evaluation and disposal of both clean and contaminated dredged material are complex, and often have resulted in delays to dredging projects. Coordinated planning and innovative approaches are needed to evaluate the risks and beneficial reuses or disposal of dredge material so dredging can continue without undue delays. For example, at the Port of New York and New Jersey, sediment contaminated with traces of dioxin have kept the Port from maintaining its channels and from deepening the Kill van Kull. NOAA and local partners are now working with the Port and other agencies to evaluate the contamination risks and develop solutions to dredging needs that solve both contamination and navigation problems and promote restoration efforts within Newark Bay.

Other innovative approaches to dredging problems have already resulted in cost-effective, environmentally sound use of dredged material for restoration. For example, in San Francisco Bay, clean dredged material from a recent Port of Oakland channel deepening project is being used to restore parts of Hamilton Army Airfield (see photograph) to productive wetlands. With advanced planning and greater coordination with the local communities, states, Federal agencies, and Port Authorities, more of these efforts would be possible, supporting the Nation's goals for dredging and for healthy coasts.

### Meeting the Challenge

This initiative will link decisions regarding where and how to dredge with regional restoration planning and ongoing restoration activities. This will allow dredging projects to take place more quickly, more cost effectively, and create greater benefit for natural resources and coastal communities. NOAA will:

- Work with the Corps of Engineers and other involved Federal, state and local agencies to identify dredging projects that can be linked with planned or ongoing restoration projects, and to develop creative habitat restoration projects using this dredge material productively. Restoration opportunities exist through NOAA's restoration work related to superfund sites, response to hazardous materials spills, and state coastal management programs.
- Establish partnerships with states and local communities to promote beneficial reuse of dredged material, including providing seed money or cost sharing of local restoration projects. Opportunities include restoration of brownfields for urban development projects that benefit local communities, and restoration of wetlands to help protect property from coastal hazards and reduce erosion.

- Expedite dredging decisions by applying NOAA's expertise on risk assessment, evaluation of contamination, and remedial design to dredging plans and watershed restoration efforts. This includes developing guidelines and practices for evaluating and disposing of contaminated sediments in an environmentally-safe manner. This advanced planning will lead to greater predictability in the process and better decisions.

### NOAA's Role

NOAA has mandated responsibilities under the Clean Water Act (404 permit reviews), Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund), Oil Pollution Act, Endangered Species Act, and other statutes to protect and preserve marine and coastal resources. As a natural resource trustee, NOAA plans and conducts habitat restoration to compensate for injuries to coastal natural resources due to the release of hazardous substances, and has a proven record of successful coastal habitat restoration. NOAA is responsible under the CZMA for working with the states and local communities to increase their capabilities to protect and manage their coastal resources. NOAA also has established relationships with the Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal agencies through participation in the National Dredging Team, established in 1995 to promote consistency on dredging issues.

Dredging issues will always be difficult to resolve. This initiative will contribute to both dredging solutions and restoration efforts resulting in a stronger coastal economy and healthier coastal resources.

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For Further Information Contact:  
Brian Wheeler  
Office of Legislative Affairs  
(202)482-4981

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